

Delivered
Tab A

The Kennedy Warren
Washington, D. C.
August 7, 1950

Dr. Kent Roberts Greenfield
Chief Historian,
Office of the Chief of Military History,
Department of the Army
Washington, D. C.

Dear Dr. Greenfield:

It is an impossible task for a man who has spent five turbulent years in Military Government (three in the War Department and two in the Department of State) to set down his impressions in one letter. Even to comment on Dr. Weinberg's splendid outline is quite out of the question because I have something to say - and some of it rather lengthy on each of his topics. About all I can do here is to express the opinion, with a brief justification, that Dr. Weinberg has reached an amazingly accurate estimate of his task.

As a professional soldier it is contrary to all of my basic instincts to say that more attention should be paid to GHQ than to the combat units in the field. However, Military Government in World War II was a queer operation and if you really wish to understand it and to draw the principal lessons from it, you must know what went on at the Government level. You can find important errors in the field operations, and great achievements too, but if you want to put your finger on the causes of our standing mistakes of military government you will find, I feel sure, that you must trace each event and occurrence back to Washington.

I am quite sure that Military Government officers who served in the field will bear me out. They will mention the wild disorder in which they were uprooted from their training centers in the United States in December 1943, and rushed by all available transportation to England, only to fume and fret in a British mud hole for six or seven months. Why? It is an important story and it must be put under the microscope. The answer, of course, can only be found in an exchange of messages between SHAEP and the War Department. The fellow in the field will want to know why the Italian Plan wasn't read on time; why it omitted any mention of the co-belligerent status that we were to give to Italy, why suddenly and without warning was Victor Emmanuel lifted onto his throne by the Allies? Why after going to all the trouble of getting 60 million dollars from Congress to feed Italians didn't HALL bring ship the food? Why was the signing of the French Civil Affairs Agreement delayed until Eisenhower had set up his headquarters in Versailles. These are a few of the events that the officer and men in the division civil affairs team will point to as his major problems. These and nearly all other major problems of military government units can be unraveled and explained only by examining the record.

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confident that it is no exaggeration to say that 90 percent of the

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troubles of Military Government in the smallest towns and units was traceable to Washington. In this respect Military Government operations were different from combat operations, and for the same reason the rules governing the historical treatment of the two activities must be different.

The real lessons of Military Government in World War II can be accurately stated in a few words:

1. Organization within the Army for the job of Military Government was late getting started. I do not mean a year or two late; I mean twenty years too late. The U. S. Army being what it is, an institution to win battles - with a fierce pride in its complete detachment from the political life of the republic, can't be expected to accept with enthusiasm and effectiveness in the middle of a war, or even at the beginning of the war, a major role in achieving the political and economic objectives of the war. To the very end of the war some of our best and most enlightened commanders carried out their military government missions because they had been told to. To the very end they entertained profound and sincere reservations as to wisdom of the using the U. S. Army in this role.

If a nation wishes to use its Army in this way, it is essential - indispensable, that it begin training its military officers in the intricacies and nuances of the business when they are lieutenants, not when they are lieutenant generals.

2. After active hostilities ended, the Army retained primary control of military government much too long. All sorts of reasons have been given for this delay, such as the intransigence of the Soviets, the logistical complexities of the problem, the reluctance of the soldiers to let go, the difficulty in finding a civilian with the peculiar qualities of Clay or MacArthur, the fact that the British would retain military control even though we switched to a civilian administration, and so forth. You and I have seen other reasons advanced. But they are not reasons at all; they are simply excuses. I was in the middle of this battle for years, and I can successfully refute the validity of all the so-called reasons, except one. The civilians weren't ready. They were late too - about twenty years.

I don't blame them for not taking over the government or relief responsibilities of 300,000,000 people without the organization to do it. I simply say that they didn't do the job they should have done because they weren't ready for it, and all the airy persiflage they have been dispensing in recent years to conceal their lack of preparation won't, I feel sure, fool the historian.

3. Two lessons, it seems to me, stand out clearly:

- (1) During active hostilities Military Government, for two reasons, must be a military endeavor with the political expert in an advisory capacity to the military commander. (Eisenhower and Murphy).
- (2) Promptly after the last shot is fired, within a matter of months, primary responsibility for Military Government should pass to civilian control with the military commander in an advisory capacity to the Civil Commissioner (McCloy and Handy).

4. The Military Commander must control Military Government during active hostilities for the following reasons:

- a. Military Government is a powerful weapon in the accomplishment of the military (tactical and strategic) objectives.
- b. In modern mechanized war the battle area has great depth. It doesn't encompass a few counties as did the Battle of Gettysburg, or even the Second Battle of the Marne. Four countries were intimately involved with the Battle of Bastogne. In a situation like this the interests of the United States cannot be divided between a military commander and a civilian commissioner. Nor can each member of an alliance be individually represented. In a set-up like SHAFF under a commander like Eisenhower, we had an ideal arrangement for fighting and winning wars. All the authority and all the resources of the alliance were in the hands of one man. It should always be so in modern warfare.
- c. It must be understood that when we speak of Military Government we are referring to every type of relationship with civilian activities in the battle area, the least difficult of which is bona-fide Military Government. The most difficult type of arrangement is the civil affairs problem in a friendly country, such as Eisenhower's partial control of French life through De Gaulle. In so delicate a situation as this it seems to me that one person, representing all Allied interests, must deal with one person representing the national interests of the liberated country.

5. It was said in 1941 and 1942 when I was an Assistant Chief of Staff(G-1) that soldiers could not be trusted with political missions. Accordingly to the authorities of that time, there is something about the military mind that repeals the thousand niceties and instincts which in the aggregate go to make up a real understanding of the democratic way of life. Did not Military Government in World War II prove that America's soldiers can rise to great heights in political roles? Who,

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in this century, with the possible exceptions of Roosevelt and Churchill, had a more difficult political assignment than Eisenhower in the year from D-Day to VE Day. It is conceded on all sides that he did his political job admirably. And who in a blue suit could have done better in extraordinarily difficult political spots than Marshall, MacArthur and Clay?

6. Finally, I come to the point which gives me pause and trouble. Granting that military men have the capabilities to carry out political missions and that it is necessary and proper that they should do so, civilians and soldiers alike, agree that, except as advisers, military men should be excluded from the formulation of political policy.

On this there is no disagreement. Yet when the record of military government is scrutinized it will be seen that the War Department had much to do with creating the political and economic policy of the United States with respect to the countries we liberated and conquered. The culprits were largely Mr. McCloy and his staff and the Director of the Civil Affairs Division and his staff.

I feel sure that students of history will be perplexed in reconciling the attitude of the War Department and of the Army regarding military participation in political policy making with the record of the War Department in this field in World War II. It is clear from reading Dr. Weinberg's Explanation of Outline that he recognized that the Army had considerable influence and exercised much initiative in this field.

However, the explanation is very simple, perhaps too simple to gain general acceptance:

First, there was no organization in Washington capable of hammering out these policies and decisions except the War Department. There wasn't even a clear and lasting decision as to what civilian departments and agencies of the government should participate in the making of policy. The Treasury Department and the Foreign Economic Administration insisted that they must be included in the machinery of policy making on equality with the Department of State, and they never failed to assert that they had presidential support for their claim. The status that these two institutions claimed for themselves was never accepted by the State Department, which maintained from beginning to end that the State Department alone among the civilian departments and agencies was responsible for policy without our borders, and that it was necessary only to consult other civilian agencies of government when the State Department felt the need for technical advice. This very bitter and troublesome controversy was never resolved. In 1945, at a time when the Army was involved in the monumental financial problems of 400,000,000 people, the Treasury Department suddenly withdrew from all the councils of Military Government and refused an opinion on any issue related to civil affairs.

But it was not only between the agencies of government that machinery was lacking for grinding out policy for us. There wasn't any organization within the State Department itself for this purpose. In the preparation of a major document, such as the post-surrender treatment of Germany, Mr. Dunn sat with Mr. McCloy and others and represented the views of the Department of State. But in day-to-day matters, such as what to do with a Czechoslovakian automobile factory that we captured in Austria, there was no one person in the State Department that we could go to. It sometimes took an officer of my staff a day, or two days or a week to bring about a meeting of all the isolated yet interested minds of the State Department on a single subject.

The responsibility for getting the answer to the question submitted by the Military Governor, or of hammering out the directive that a theater commander would need on a given day was the War Department's responsibility.

We did, we had to do, whatever was necessary to get the job done.

Second, the experience and the mental outlook of diplomats make it almost impossible for them to deal with military government policy requirements during active hostilities. I do not say this in criticism of them. I simply make the point that after spending their lives collecting facts and information on which to base sound and sensible conclusions, they appear to be constitutionally incapable of complying with a directive which requires them to reach a conclusion by a certain hour on a certain date whether or not they have in their possession at that time all the facts and information on which to base a conclusion. I hesitate to say how many hundred times in three years I was told that it would be impossible to give policy guidance or direction to a military commander by the time he was scheduled to invade a certain country or island or province, because essential recent information was not at hand, or that masses of information which was on hand couldn't possibly be collected and digested in time, or that conflicting views could not possibly be resolved in an orderly and scholarly way by X-Y or D-Day.

This is a point of view which is very difficult to assail because it is anchored on the solid rocks of honesty and intellectual integrity. On the other hand, it was impossible to inform MacArthur that he would receive his political program for the Philippines after he had conquered the archipelago, because only in that way could we give him a program based on the solid foundation of existing conditions as we uncovered them, during his advance across the islands. This is only a slight exaggeration. I did my very best in 1944 to induce the Department

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of State to begin the preparation of a directive for Japan. Dozens of precious hours over many months I devoted to this project. Every conceivable and, under ordinary circumstances, reasonable objection was raised. In the end I gave up, and ordered the Civil Affairs Division to prepare the document. When VJ-Day was imminent and only days remained for the preparation of MacArthur's Japanese Directive, the only scrap of paper in Washington on this subject was the one prepared by my staff, in collaboration of course, with Mr. McElroy and his staff. Without this advance work by the War Department only the Lord known how long MacArthur and the Far Eastern Commission would have waited for an expression of our views on the post-defeat treatment of Japan.

I feel strongly that Dr. Weinberg's volumes will sacrifice much of their usefulness to military leaders and to high civilian officials if they fail to establish the fact that there are few parallels between the conduct of military operations and of a civil affairs program. Once the grand strategy is defined, the area for disagreement is reduced to relative trivialities, so far as the plan of campaign is concerned. For instance, after the decision had been reached to invade northern Europe from the U.K. base, the American and British members of the Combined Chiefs of Staff never had a disagreement on a major issue. I do not mean that problems of transcendental importance did not arise, because they did. I simply say that these problems were of such a nature that trained military men of any nationality would solve them in much the same way. In fact, beginning with D-Day the important decisions in the conduct of the military operations were not made at the government level or by the Combined Chiefs of Staff. They were made by Eisenhower. Thereafter, Marshall and Dill observed the progress of the campaign, and assisted, supported and encouraged Eisenhower. That is about all they had to do, all they could do.

On the other hand, a head of State watching the landing on Normandy with one eye on Berlin would have been overwhelmed with the decisions yet unmade in the field of Military Government, which could be ground out only at the top-most level. This would have been true even with the very best prewar attention to the conduct of civil affairs. Political problems are not susceptible to solution by rule and formula in the same way as battles and campaigns. The political judgment and plan do not lend themselves to exact and neat definition as do military orders for the attack, the defense or the pursuit. They come from opposite ends of the brain, and it is impossible to package them together tidily.

Nearly every commentator I have read during and since the war has discussed the civil affairs officer as though he was a cabinet maker. Invariably, there is an invidious comparison between the Lt. Colonel who captured the town, and the Lt. Colonel who moved in on his heels

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to govern it. The combat commander was always portrayed as a self-reliant, confident and competent chap who moved his units about the terrain with efficiency and dispatch. "He knew where he was going and how to get there." Consequently, at the appointed hour he turned the team over to the bustling M. G. O." That's about the way the tale goes. From then on any one can fill in the story of the MGO, as related by the commentator.

It would be just as reasonable to compare Einstein with Jack Dempsey.

Military science is a science, difficult in the extreme, but a science. Government is an exceedingly troublesome art, which few men really master. Of all forms of government the toughest is military government, where the will of the conqueror is imposed upon the conquered, or in that extreme of all extremes where the will of the foreign liberator is imposed upon the chagrined and psychopathic liberated population.

With a ready acknowledgment that it could have been done better, I have never ceased to be amazed at the job that the Army did in Military Government, excluding of course any judgment about the equality of the performance in the War Department.

In reading over what I have written, I am more disappointed than I thought I should be. I am sure you will feel much the same way. I have attempted, however, and in some measure I have succeeded in skinning the top of the thoughts that popped into my mind as I read your letter and the enclosures by Dr. Weinberg.

I have only one postscript to add. What I have written may appear to be a defense of my conduct as Director of the Civil Affairs Division. Not one word have I written, however, with that motive. I have defended and I always defend and always shall defend the American Military Government officers of World War II. He is an amazing fellow, and he did, all things considered, an extraordinary job. I have no apologies to make for him.

I am at present in Arizona on a short visit. I shall return to the East early in August. I work in New York, but I still maintain a residence in Washington where I spend most of my week-ends. If you or Dr. Weinberg would like to chat with me about your civil affairs project, I am sure that I can adjust my activities to make such a conference possible.

Thank you for asking me to comment.

Kindest regards and best wishes.

Sincerely yours,

John Hildring